

Medieval Rus and its Neighbors

Christian Raffensperger

History 251H/C - 1W

LO 2 and 10

Fall Semester 2023

MWF 11:00-11:50 A.M.

Hollenbeck 315

The medieval kingdom of Rus occupied a large stretch of eastern Europe from the Baltic Sea in the north to the Black Sea in the south. It is the historical progenitor of the modern nations of Ukraine, Russia, and Belarus. We will begin with the exploration and settlement of the Vikings in Eastern Europe as the roots of the kingdom of Rus. That state was integrated into the larger medieval world through a variety of means, from Christianization to dynastic marriage, and economic ties. However, over the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the creation of the crusading ideal and the arrival of the Mongols began the process of transforming and absorbing Rus into a variety of polities such as Novgorod, Muscovy, Poland, and Lithuania, as well as part of the Mongol world empire itself. The story of medieval Rus and its neighbors is a unique one that impacts both the traditional history of medieval Europe, as well as the birth of a Eurasian empire.

Writing Intensive

Counts for PAST Program

This course supports general education **LO2**: Students will write effectively, considering audience and purpose; and **LO 10**: Students will analyze problems, issues, or representations using knowledge, theories, or methods appropriate to the humanities (in this case, historical methods).

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Course Learning Outcomes:

- 1) Students will be able to describe selected content, issues and problems in the history of Rus and its neighbours (including Poland, Byzantium, Lithuania, and Hungary).
- 2) Students will be able to critically analyze selected themes in medieval history, especially political history and religious history with a special focus on the place of Rus in its region and within western Eurasia.
- 3) Students will read and analyze a wide variety of primary sources;
- 4) Students will demonstrate critical and analytical skills related to historical methods of interpretation (such as the ability to distinguish between fact and interpretation);
- 5) Students will develop an intellectual curiosity and appreciation of the role of history in shaping the world we live in.

Assignments and Deadlines

The format for this class is lecture and discussion, and thus attendance is a main requirement of the course, as is participation.

As a way to track your progress on the readings, there will be a series of quizzes during class. All quizzes will be unannounced. However, common themes for the quizzes will be maps and identifications of main people and concepts discussed in the class. The best way to prepare for these quizzes is to keep up with reading and lecture. If you have questions, please ask!

Over the course of the semester, you will be required to write two papers to meet **LO2**. Both of which will be 5-7 pages in length. The first paper will be a primary source analysis paper, which is discussed below. The second paper will be a historiography paper. Historiography is the study of how history is written, it is not the writing of history itself. I will be asking you to read the work of several historians for each paper and to compare and contrast those works. Do not tell me the story of the Ivan the Terrible, that is history. Tell me, instead, what historian “X” has to say about Ivan the Terrible, and then what historian “Y” has to say about Ivan the Terrible and how the two are similar and different. That is historiography. If you have questions about this concept, please ask. For each of these papers, we will spend approximately 1 week discussing the material in class, as well as working on draft outlines of the paper. This process will allow you to gain a fuller understanding of the material through those discussions, and of what is expected of you during the paper writing process.

Each paper can be re-written to increase the grade of the paper as much as one full grade (C to B; B to A). To properly rewrite the paper, you will need to take into account the comments on the initial version of the paper and rewrite fully (not just make small changes) to improve the paper as a whole. I am happy to meet with you to discuss this process, so please do come see me. The revised paper must be turned in one week from the date that graded papers are handed back. Papers turned in after that time will not be accepted.

The papers must use Chicago Manual of Style footnotes to document your evidence. If you have questions about this, or any other aspect of the papers, please ask me, or utilize the Writing Center on the first floor of Hollenbeck Hall. Papers must be turned in in hard copy, in class, the day that they are due.

The first of these will be a primary source analysis paper in which you will compare multiple primary sources, discuss who wrote them, why they wrote them, when they wrote them and what they say. The goal is to understand how historians use primary sources and you should include examples of how those sources were used in class or in the secondary source readings in your paper. The paper will be based on primary source readings regarding Yaroslav's succession to the Kyivan throne.

The second paper is a historiographical analysis related to scholarship on the Mongols. We will read the work of Charles Halperin and Donald Ostrowski, two prominent historians working on the interactions between the Mongols and Russia/Muscovy. We will discuss their work in groups, with an in class prompt, and you will analyze their views of the Mongols and their relationship with Russia/Muscovy. Following that in class discussion, you will write a paper containing your analysis. You may refer to material from class as a third source, but primarily you should focus on Halperin and Ostrowski, this assignment does not require outside sources.

Finally, there will be three exams which will divide up the material in the course and test your understanding of Humanities methodology (LO10). The exams will not be cumulative but will each cover approximately 1/3 of the class. There will be a final cumulative essay, assigned during the last week of classes and due during finals week. This will be an essay to try and tie together what you have learned over the course of the class. As part of the assessment process this essay must be a minimum of 1500 words, this results in an approximately 6-page (double-spaced) paper.

If you have any questions about any of these assignments, please come see me during my office hours or make an appointment. Finally, this syllabus is subject to change by the instructor, if changed, the students will be informed with sufficient notice to complete assignments.

The grades will be weighted as follows:

- Attendance: 5%
- Participation: 5% (CLO 5)
- Exam 1: 15% (CLO 1 / 2 / 4)
- Exam 2: 15% (CLO 1 / 2 / 4)
- Quizzes: 10% (CLO 1 / 2 / 4)
- Primary Source Analysis Paper: 15% (CLO3)
- Mongols Historiography Paper: 15% (CLO 2 / 3 / 4)
- Exam 3: 15% (CLO 1 / 2 / 4)
- Cumulative Essay: 5% (CLO 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5)

Reflection Option for General Education Signature Assignment

In a cover letter for your signature assignment, the Cumulative Essay submitted at the end of the semester, please describe how your work on this assignment connects with one or more of the following:

- Your work in other courses
 - Particularly anything related to the Cultures grouping
- Your major(s)
- Your minor(s)
- Any of the career readiness items on the list below:
 - *Critical Thinking/Problem Solving*: Exercise sound reasoning to analyze issues, make decisions, and overcome problems.
 - *Oral/Written Communications*: Articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively in written and oral forms to persons inside and outside of the organization.

Required Books

Christian Raffensperger and Donald Ostrowski, *The Ruling Families of Rus: Clan, Family, and Kingdom* (hereafter *Ruling Families*)
Portraits of Medieval Eastern Europe, 900-1400, ed. Donald Ostrowski and Christian Raffensperger (hereafter *Portraits*)

Additional readings not from these books will be on Moodle and in the Reader provided in class

Schedule of Meetings and Assignments

Week 1 (August 28, August 30, September 1): The Kingdom of Rus

(*Ruling Families*, ch. 1; PVL 1; *Portraits*, ch. 16-17)

Origins of the Kingdom of Rus and its place in medieval Europe; Vikings, Bulgars, Byzantines, oh my.

Week 2 (September 6, 8): Iaroslav and the Succession of Volodimer

(*Ruling Families*, ch. 3; PVL 2; *Portraits*, ch. 2)

Christianization of Rus under Volodimer and Iaroslav's succession as ruler; Iaroslav's reign and a "golden age"

Week 3 (September 11, 13, 15): Iaroslav's Succession Sources

(*Ruling Families*, ch. 3; *Russian Primary Chronicle* 3; *Deeds of the Princes of the Poles* 3; Thietmar of Merseburg)

We will read and discuss three primary sources this week and work to understand how they help us create our narrative of events.

Week 4 (September 18, 20, 22): Mstislav / Harald and his Family (Primary Source Paper Due 9/18)

(*Ruling Families*, ch. 4; *Portraits*, ch. 1, 19)

Scandinavian connections of the Rus; Dynastic marriages; Engagement with the steppe and elsewhere.

Week 5 (September 25, 27, 29): Vsevolod "Big Nest" and NE Rus

(*Ruling Families*, ch. 5; Lay of Igor's Campaign; *Portraits*, ch. 6)

Foundation of Northeastern Rus and Vladimir-Suzdal; Ties with Byzantium; Relations with the south.

Week 6 (October 2, 4, 6): Roman Mstislavich and Galicia-Volhynia (Exam 1 – 10/2)

(*Ruling Families*, ch. 6; *Portraits*, ch. 20)

The creation of Galicia-Volhynia in the Southwest of Rus; Ties with Poland and Hungary; Disintegration of Kyivan power.

Week 7 (October 9, 11, 13): Alexander Nevsky, Mongols, and Crusaders

(*Ruling Families*, ch. 7; "Tale of the Life and Courage of the Pious and Great Prince Alexander;" *Portraits*, ch. 3)

Arrival of Mongols from the east and Crusaders from the west; Place of Novgorod, and Rus, between these two powers.

Week 8 (October 18, 20): Iurii Daniilovich, Moscow, and Mongols

(*Ruling Families*, ch. 8; "Tale of the Destruction of Riazan;" "Memoir of a Tatar Prince: Ismail ibn Ahmed")

Creation of Moscow and the Daniilovichi as a powerhouse in Rus; Negotiations and use of Mongols in intra-Russian conflict.

Week 9 (October 23, 25, 27): Role of the Mongols in Rus

(Halperin, *Russia and the Golden Horde*; Ostrowski, *Muscovy and the Mongols*)

Discussion/Debate over role of Mongols in Russia – Halperin v. Ostrowski

Week 10 (October 30, November 1, 3): Iurii Lvovich and SW Rus (Mongol Debate Paper Due 10/30)

(*Ruling Families*, ch. 9; “Vasilii Kalika, Archbishop of Novgorod (r. 1330-52)”)

Deeper integration of SW Rus with its neighbors of Poland and Hungary; Ties with the Mongols and with the West.

Week 11 (November 6, 8, 10): Uliana Alexandrova and Poland-Lithuania (Exam 2 – 11/6)

(*Ruling Families*, ch. 10; *Portraits*, ch. 5)

The creation of Poland-Lithuania, its Christianization, and relations with different christianities; Absorption of pieces of Rus into the new polity.

Week 12 (November 13, 15, 17): Vasily Dmitrievich

(*Ruling Families*, ch. 11; “Holy Images for the Grand Prince”)

The beginning of the end of the Mongols concomitant with growing Muscovite power; Solidification of dynastic claims.

Week 13 (November 27, 29, December 1 - NO Class November 20): Ivan III Vasilievich births Muscovy

(*Ruling Families*, ch. 12; “Anna Koltovskaia: A Russian Tsaritsa”)

The triumph of Muscovy in the NE and its claim to hegemony in the historical narrative; Dominance over Novgorod; Face-off with Poland-Lithuania.

Week 14 (December 4, 6, 8): The future of eastern Europe (Exam 3 – 12/8)

(*Ruling Families*, epilogue)

What happens to Poland-Lithuania? Or Muscovy? Where does eastern Europe fit into the larger medieval world as it transitions to modernity?

Cumulative Essay Due – Tuesday, December 12 by noon

Communication with Faculty

If you have questions about class, would like to know your grade, would like to set up a time to meet, or need to let me know that you will not be in class, please email me. When you email me, please put the topic in the subject line so I know what you would like to discuss. Your email should begin with a salutation such as “Dear Professor Raffensperger”. It should not begin with “hey” or “I need”. Your email should close with something polite as well. “Best wishes” “have a good day,” or something similar is just fine, followed by

your name. I would emphasize that they are not fussy, outdated conventions, but things that you will need to know to live in the world. Employers will not appreciate the casual informality with which you might be most comfortable.

Missed Examinations, Papers, and Class Sessions

A good rule of thumb is do not miss anything. However, if you are ill or have a conflict and cannot make a class, notify me in advance or as soon after the class as is possible. *Do not miss examinations!* If you have a conflict, notify me a minimum of one week in advance and we can schedule an exam as close to the normal time as possible. If you miss an examination for reasons that are not discussed with me ahead of time or are not catastrophic you will receive a zero, which is much worse than an F in your overall grade. Late papers are accepted for one week, but the grade will drop one full grade when turned in after class the day it is due. For each additional day thereafter (weekend day or weekday) that it is late, it will drop a fraction of a grade, for example—an A paper handed in after class will be a B paper, handed in the next day will be a B- paper, the next day a C+ paper.

Attendance Policy

As part of your grade for this class, and to get the most out of the class, you are required to attend on a regular basis. Attendance in this class is worth 5% of your grade, and attendance will be taken on a regular basis. If you are going to miss class, let me know in advance. If you accumulate 3 unexcused absences over the course of the semester, you will receive a grade of F for your attendance. If you miss 7 or more classes over the course of the semester you will receive a grade of zero for your attendance, much worse than an F when calculating your final grade. You are solely responsible for signing the attendance sheet, or notifying me of your absence, as proof of your presence in class.

Accessibility Services

Wittenberg University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, learning, chronic health, physical, hearing, vision and neurological, or temporary medical conditions, etc.), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, you must register with the Accessibility Services office by emailing accessibilityservices@wittenberg.edu. You can also find information on the Accessibility Services webpage found at www.wittenberg.edu/success. Please note that services are confidential, may take time to put into place, and are not retroactive. The Accessibility Services Office is located in the COMPASS: Sweet Success Center, Thomas Library, on the first floor.

Weather-Related Concerns

Whenever weather becomes a problem, I shall do my best to adhere to the university guidelines. If the university cancels classes, there will be no class. If the university has not cancelled class, but I am unable or unwilling to risk traveling, I will do my best to post a notice to this effect on Moodle as early as possible. I will do my best not to cancel class if at all possible.

If there is an exam scheduled or a deadline for a written assignment on a day when class is cancelled, you may assume that the exam or assignment will be due on the following class session.

Academic Honesty

Students in this course are expected to uphold the standards of Wittenberg's Code of Academic Integrity. At its most basic level, this means that you will not turn in someone else's writing as your own, quote from a source without proper acknowledgment, or provide a classmate with inappropriate help. You will be asked to submit papers and exams with the following statement followed by your signature: "I affirm that my work upholds the highest standards of honesty and academic integrity at Wittenberg, and that I have neither given nor received any unauthorized assistance." Sanctions for violating these rules range from receiving no credit for a particular assignment to failing the course for a significant act of academic dishonesty. If you are in doubt about any of these rules, please talk to me before submitting your work.